

Moonshiners of the Cities.

Illicit Distilling According to the Methods of the Metropolis.

No Personal Liberty Sentiment Urges the Law-breaker-on, but Solely Greed for Money.

ARE CAPITALISTS BEHIND THEM?

Singular Coincidences That Indicate There is an Organized Movement to Defraud Uncle Sam and Dodge His Officers.

When one hears of moonshiners and of moonshine whiskey, the words bring to mind lofty mountains and secluded valleys and lonely places where hidden distillers carry on their work. Yet the revenue officials say that the moonshining of the mountains is not so great as is that of the cities, and that in New York and Brooklyn more illicit distilling has been carried on than in any other parts of the United States.

A quarter of a century ago there was a great crusade against the distillers of Brooklyn, but since then there has been much difficulty in apprehending offenders. This has resulted, doubtless, from the fact that many men were frightened from the business, and that those who remained in it were doubly careful. For some time past, however, there has been a vigorous campaign carried on against the distillers of both New York and Brooklyn, and numerous arrests have been made and numerous stills seized.

Up to within a little more than a year ago the arrests in Brooklyn (where there has always been more of the illicit business than in New York) averaged for seven years only one a year, and there was only one conviction out of the number. Within the past year ten stills have been raided and broken up, and numerous convictions secured.

In the South moonshiners are a picturesque people, and their distilling is picturesque in its surroundings and operations. The moonshiners of New York and Brooklyn are decidedly the reverse, for they are mostly foreigners of the unattractive class. Many of them cannot even speak English. Not intelligent, they are ignorant, cunning and watchful, and are difficult to trap.

Instead of the old-fashioned stills and worms used by earlier moonshiners, and universally used in the mountains, these foreigners use improved apparatus that reduces the labor and waste to a minimum. For raw material they take molasses or sugar. There is a radical difference between these city moonshiners and those of the Cohattas and the Blue Ridge. The city men are in the business for money only. It is merely a convenient way of getting rich. The mountaineers, on the other hand, are distillers by what they believe to be their actual right. They grow their corn too far from market towns to allow of hauling it there in a bulky state, and they believe that they are justified in distilling it into portable form.

The cost of distilled spirit to the maker is about fifteen cents a gallon. The Government tax on spirit of this degree of proof is about \$1.50 a gallon. The usual price at which the city moonshiners sell it is understood to be \$1 a gallon. There is, thus a very great profit for both buyer and seller. There are many among our foreign population who like to drink the high quality of spirits just as they have the influence of essence and alcohol.

It is shrewdly suggested by some of the officials that there is organized capital behind the present business of moonshining in the two cities. The men who are captured are of just the type to make willing and capable tools. That the apparatus is always of the best, that the same lawyers appear so commonly to defend the various prisoners wherever they are captured, and

that the profits are such as to tempt capital to go into the business are among the reasons that have led the officials to this conclusion.

These suspicions do not apply to the illicit distilling so long and so successfully carried on by the five Brady brothers, whose power has finally been broken, and whose leader, the famous John Brady, was recently lodged in jail to await his trial for moonshining. The Bradys have been moonshining on their own account, and not as out-fits for others to use.

The Brady still that was raided last March, on Driggs street, in Brooklyn, was the officers say the largest illicit still ever seized in the United States. It had a capacity of over four barrels of spirits a day, and there were two mash tubs, holding 1,600 gallons of mash each. It cost estimated that the cost of constructing the outfit was not less than \$1,500. The capacity of an illicit still is very rarely greater than sixty gallons a day.

A moonshiner who was raided not long ago at Brighton Beach had a unique way of getting rid of a great deal of his product. He lived in a good-looking, lace-curtained house, and there was nothing to draw special attention to either it or himself. Frequently he was seen leaving the house with a large satchel in his hand, but that of course caused no suspicion. When, however, his house was raided and found to contain an illicit still, the satchel was an interesting item among the things seized. For inside of it was fitted a tin can holding about eight gallons. This satchel is among the many mementos of various raids in the vaults beneath the Brooklyn Post Office. There are many curious things there, including distilling apparatus, liquors, cigars, leech tubs and other articles that revenue men find upon their hands upon raids.

A dairyman of Maspeth, near Greenpoint, who had turned his attention to distilling as a means of making more money than he could with cows, was not satisfied with anything so small as an eight-gallon can. Sometimes, when he drove into Brooklyn or New York, his wagon was loaded with cans that held milk, while at other times the cans contained spirits. When the Government seized his plant he lost his cows and cans. Forfeiture of all property used in connection with illicit distilling is one of the dreaded consequences of conviction.

Less ambitious than the man with his milk cans were the distillers captured in the raid in Prince street, in Brooklyn, for they had with them some three-gallon oval cans in which they were to have taken the product away.

The Prince street raid, which took place a few days ago, was due to neither a spy nor a detective, but came about in a most peculiar manner. A young man, looking for a house to rent, was given the key to No. 149 Prince street. There is a double house there, No. 149 being one half and No. 147 the other. By mistake he tried the lock of No. 147, and as the key opened it he went in. There was no furniture in the building, but down in the rear room of the basement he saw something else. This was a very peculiar arrangement of fireplace, boiler, barrels and pans—an arrangement that made him think at once that he had found a still, although he had never before seen one.

He said nothing to the house-renting agent, but instead reported to the authorities. Next morning a party of officers went there, expecting to find a deserted still and prepared to tear it out. They found that the house was being used as a workshop for the manufacture of spirits. The men were terribly chagrined at being captured in the very outset of their work.

The most brilliant period of Northern moonshining was over twenty years ago, when Brooklyn contained a large number of stills, which turned out an immense amount of spirits. But the moonshining was brilliantly checked. The location of a large number of stills was learned by means of a spy, and one morning before daybreak troops were landed from Governor's Island and marched in detachments to the various points, and a general capture and seizure were the result.

If, as suggested, there is really capital behind the moonshiners of to-day, it is more than likely that there are many un-recovered stills in operation, as the rate of profit is so high.

Whims of Martinets.
[Blackwood's Magazine.]

"What made you leave the army at so early an age, and with such a fair record behind you and so promising a career in front of you?" I once asked an officer, whose chief defect was a pronounced act on hot-headed impulse. The purport of his reply was: "At my last inspection I was questioned by the general concerning the price of the soldiers' boots and shirts. I gave him to understand that I neither knew nor cared, and, of course, I was pretty sharply reprimanded. I became so disgusted with this and



"They Can Cause Flames to Issue from Their Mouths, Ears and Nostrils."

Savages as Jugglers.

Strange Deeds Performed by the Red-Skinned Mystery Men.

A Rope Feat That Ranks with East Indian Tales of Magic.

SORCERERS WHICH BECAME ANIMALS.

The Wabeno Magician Flies Through the Air Unseen—A Duckskin That Made Life-Saving Medicine.

Washington, Jan. 11.—If there is any one who doubts Indian magic, he should talk with Dr. W. J. Hoffman, the Government ethnologist. He has a legion of tales concerning the wonderful powers of the American Indian, and declares the American Indian is as mysterious in his way as his brother in the far East.

"Christian missionaries have found the Indian magic a serious obstacle to their evangelizing efforts," said he. "Sorcery is intimately associated with the aboriginal worship, and the savages, after astonishing the priests with their tricks, laugh at them, saying: 'Your religion can't do such things.' I happen to know of the case of a Jesuit priest who some years ago went to work among the Arahapoes and Cheroneas, west of the Mississippi. He gave up the business of saving their souls after a while and came away entirely discouraged. They did things which, he declared, were entirely beyond his understanding. The mystery men would go out on the bare, sandy prairie, where there was not a scrap of vegetation, and, after some chanting and various performances, grass would come up out of the ground, quite a patch of it, green and growing. He himself saw it grow, and there could be no doubt about it."

"I once saw an interesting trick performed inside of a ceremonial wigwam. There was a man of venerable age, and in the midst of which a woman came forward and struck the ground in the middle of the lodge. Then a mystery man began scratching with a stick on the spot which the woman had struck. In a minute or two there was exposed to view the leaves of a full-grown wild turnip. The vegetable was dug up and given to the spectators, to show there was no deception and at the same time to quell the appetite. Scarcely had again with his stick, the magician produced several more turnips—two or three dozen of them. I should have been more astonished, however, if, being an initiated member of the secret society, I had not been present in the morning and seen the woman bury the turnips."

"In the Menomoni tribe today there is a juggler of great reputation. One of his tricks is done with a bear's claw and a small, disk-shaped pocket mirror. He takes the mirror in one hand and the bear's claw in the other. Then, swaying his body from side to side and keeping up a monotonous chanting, he brings the claw nearer to the mirror, until finally there is contact between the two, and the claw stands upon its point upright on the mirror. Presently, by a sudden movement, the glass is turned upside down, and the claw still remains attached to it by the point. It is quite surprising, but a particle of ordinary spruce gum is the secret cause."

"The late Garrick Mallory, of the Bureau of Ethnology, once told me of something quite unaccountable which he witnessed at White Earth in 1890. There was present a famous mystery man, who made a wager with the local government agent that the latter could not tie him with ropes so that he would not be able to easily disengage himself. This agent, assisted by Mallory and other white men, tied the Indian in most elaborate fashion, and placed him inside a conical wigwam in the middle of an open space. Nobody else was permitted to go near him. As soon as the men withdrew, tremendous thumping sounds were heard from the hut, which swayed from side to side. Two or three minutes later the Indian called out, telling them to go to a certain house several hundred yards away, where they would find their ropes. One of the white men was sent to the house, when he found the ropes with all of the complicated knots untied. The tying committee opened the wigwam, then, and found the wizard smoking a pipe, with his black magic stone on his lap. Neither pipe nor stone had been there previously. The head priest of the wizard society, having heard of this exhibition, sent word that he would be killed if he repeated such a performance for gain and honor."

"The Wabeno tribe has a great reputation for certain kinds of jugglery. These Indians are called by others the 'players with fire.' They perform many fearful ceremonies at night, to which fire is an essential. They handle fire and walk

through it. It is said that they can cause flames to issue from their ears, mouths and nostrils, and it is also a common belief that they can transform themselves into animals with fiery eyes. One trick which they actually perform seems unaccountable. A Wabeno mystery man sends himself in his lodge, while the young men surround it entirely with a ring of brightly blazing fire. At the same time an empty lodge at a distance of fifty paces will be enlivened with fire in like manner. Both lodges are closed tightly, all the people of the village looking on intently, and yet, after the space of a few moments, the magician, the juggler, having been kicked away, is discovered calmly sitting in what was before the empty lodge, and the one previously occupied is found to be vacant."

"Belonging to a tribe with which I had acquaintance was an Indian, generally depicted by his fellow Redskins, who always carried about with him a medicine bag made of an old duckskin. On one occasion, so the story was told to me, he joined a fishing party. While they were off on the expedition, several boatloads of hostile savages appeared. They tried to escape, but their bows could paddle faster, and apparently they had no chance to get away. The pursuers came on so swiftly that the pursued were demoralized. One of the latter remarked to the no-account Indian: 'If your duckskin is any good, make medicine with it now and make it quick.' In response, the owner of the duckskin bag held it in the water, and at once the speed of the boat increased so much that the hunting party escaped."

Seemingly, the spirit of the duck operated after the manner of a paddle wheel and pushed the boat along. It was much mystified on one occasion by a trick that I saw performed in a big medicine lodge. In the course of a long ceremonial an Indian took a bag about the size of a large handkerchief and manipulated it in such a manner as to show that it contained nothing. Then he danced around the lodge slowly, holding the bag between his fingers by the upper corner. Presently the heads of two snakes appeared from the mouth of the bag, and about a foot of the length of each snake became visible. But it chanced that the juggler in his dancing passed by the open door of the lodge, and then I understood the fake. The light shining through the bag showed that it contained no snakes. What had appeared from the bag was merely the stiffened heads and bodies for a short length of a couple of rattlers. They were made to stick out by pulling taut the piece of tape to which they were attached.

"A good many of these Indian tricks I was able to solve. Some of the most remarkable ones which are perfectly well authenticated, I never saw. I knew of a juggler who could take ripe red cherries out of his mouth at any season of the year. One credible witness assured me that he knew the cherries were real, because he had eaten them."

A Lord Mayor's Banquet.
[London Letter to Philadelphia Evening Telegraph.]

If there is one thing the city does well, it is a banquet in the Guildhall, under the shadow of Gog and Magog. It ought to, for it has had no end of experience. Saturday night's feast was pretty much on a par with those which have gone before, with the exception that the material guests were of a different political color. What they said and how they said it you have already learned. What they ate and what they drank you may like to know. The quantity of silver plate rivalled the famous shogun in value. Here is list of it: 1,000 small forks, 5,000 large forks, 3,800 large tablespoons, 2,400 small tablespoons, 2,000 teaspoons, 2,000 small knives, 2,200 small knives, 824 oval entree dishes, 320 cruetes, 42 bread baskets, 220 fruit covers, 50 large soup tureens, 140 soup ladles, 1,250 soup plates, 59 grape scoopers, 412 waiters' trays, 744 round entree dishes, 220 for bowls and 48 champagne coolers. The list of eatables was appalling. First of all came the soup—turkey, of course. Clear is the favorite as compared with 87 of the other. In the shape of fish the supplies were of the splendid. As many as 250 lobsters were served up in a la Parisienne and 250 more converted into salad. Besides, there was a host of other fish trifles. The birds of the air also contributed largely to the banquet of his Lordship's guests, the slaughter having included 200 turkeys, 200 partridges, 100 pheasants, 300 plovers, and 200 chickens. And in much the same proportion were the scores of other varieties of food for consumption. What the 900 guests had to drink is even more interesting. The "drinks" at the wedding reception on Monday morning made a world's record if all the wine seen for use were made the personal property of the banqueters. A big quantity was on hand, "just as a precaution, you know. Altogether there were no fewer than 2,480 bottles of wine, including 144 of sherry, 144 port, 312 claret, 480 hock, and 1,800 champagne, composed of equal quantities of three sorts.

Some Big Things.
[St. Louis Globe-Democrat.]

The most perfect echo in the world is said to be that at Shipley, in Sussex, South England. It will repeat twenty-one syllables.

The largest sponge ever sent to market was from the Mediterranean. It was ten feet in circumference and three in diameter.

It is said that the largest bar of gold ever cast was sent to the Bank of California in 1882. It weighed 5114 pounds.

It is said that the largest crane in the world is in the Krupp iron works. It lifts and turns a weight of 150 tons.

The largest cast bronze statue in the world is that of Peter the Great at St. Petersburg. It is a weight of 100 tons.

The largest stick of timber was cut in Washington. It was 150 feet long and an average of 20 by 21 inches.

The greatest fish is that long famous as the giant of the Krimin in Moscow. Its weight is 443,722 pounds.

Ownership of Fish.
[Hudson River Dispatch to Chicago Tribune.]

James Bly has rendered a decision in a famous fish case. Suit was brought by the Willow River Club, composed of St. Paul capitalists, who bought several hundred acres of land in this vicinity for fishing purposes. Twelve cases were on the September term for fishing on private grounds. Judge Bundy decided against the club, and holds that "it has been the settled law of this country ever since the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers that the fish be-

Rhannin Is Bullet Proof.

He Calls Himself the Man with the Iron Skin, and Astounds Scientists.

Knives, Daggers, Stilettoes, Swords, Needles and Razors Glance Harmlessly Off His Body.

PROTECTED BY A DRUG, HE SAYS.

A Cingalese Freak Who Forces His Body Through a Small Hoop Bristling with All Kinds of Sharp Instruments.

Berlin, Jan. 8.—The scientific sensation of the day here is the Man with the Iron Skin. You can't stab him, you can't cut him, you can't even scratch him. People have tried, and failed. Surgeons have striven to jab him with their instruments, but the sharp steel has glanced harmlessly from his skin.

This most extraordinary of freaks comes from the land "where every prospect pleases, and only man is vile." However much a beneficent British rule may have mitigated the yellowness of the Cingalese character, it can hardly be suspected of having toughened the aboriginal cuticle to such an extent as is shown by this particular native. If it had a revolt in Ceylon it might assume an unexpectedly formidable aspect. It would amount to a fight between English troops and bullet-proof rebels.

For there is nothing to show that the Man with the Iron Skin is not measurably bullet-proof. He has not yet tested his powers in that direction. What is established beyond peradventure is that he is knife-proof, dagger-proof, sword-proof, razor-proof and needle-proof.

A handsome brown creature of herculean frame, with the straight, black hair and big, fiery eyes characteristic of his race, if he were not iron-skinned he could eke out a living as an artist's model. He has his little story, of course, to account for his invulnerability, but it is not good enough for the public. It is scouted by the medical fraternity. Rhannin says that he has discovered a drug which toughens his skin. When the tale is discredited he displays his ivory in an ingenious grin, and invites the doctors to evolve their own theories on the subject.

This he has tried, and tried, and tried to do, but it cannot be said that they have illuminated the problem to any important extent. One rather lame and indefinite conclusion is that Rhannin is a fakir, who has achieved his strange immunity by long practice. But the learned theorists do not attempt to explain the nature of the practice to which he has subjected himself, so that soldiers might in these troublous times be subjected to a similar process with the object of making them invulnerable in the impending clash of nations.

The professors of the Berlin Clinic have had the courage to avow their mystification, and have deemed Rhannin's peculiarity of sufficient scientific importance to form the subject of lectures and demonstrations.

The most notable feat with which Rhannin astonishes all who see him is this: He takes a hoop, so small in size that under any circumstances it would seem almost incredible that he should pass his body through it. But to add to the difficulty the inside of this hoop bristles with sharp knife points, daggers, nails and other ugly trifles, all converging toward the centre. And through this circular chevron of fire the Man with the Iron Skin forces himself without sustaining so much as a scratch on his shining brown skin.



A Raid on a Moonshiner's Still in Brooklyn.
(From sketches made by the spot at the time.)



Rhannin, the Man Whose Skin Turns Bullets and Blunts Knives.
(Sketches from life.)

The Dagger-Lined Hoop Rhannin Crawls Through.